

1 dye-imprinted portions of said object surface, which are exposed by removing said solid film.

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3 By way of contrast, Lopez, U.S. Patent No. 4,129,669, does not disclose or
4 remotely suggest removing paint from imprinted regions of an object surface, stating at
5 column 4, lines 35-37 and continuing at column 4, lines 1 and 2, "The stencil 40 is then
6 applied to the surface to be decorated, paint is applied to stencil 40 including the decorative
7 design portion and after the paint has dried, the canvas (sic.) (stencil) is removed from the
8 surface leaving the decorative design painted thereon."

9 JP 62-026039 does not disclose or remotely suggest the possibility of using
10 peelable stenciling ink applied through openings in a stencil plate, much less disclosing or
11 suggesting removability *en masse* of a stencil plate and a solidified ink film. Rather, JP '039
12 suggests only applying dye-containing releasable ink to "one area and another area" (page
13 6, lines 12 of translation), or, at page 6, lines 3-6, using a dye-containing releasing paint to
14 mask areas from being colored when an object is immersed in a dye-bath. Hence, there is
15 no suggestion in either Lopez or JP '039 to combine teachings of those references to arrive
16 at a method of applying a dye-containing releasing paint through openings in a stencil plate
17 to an object surface. JP '039 states on page 6, lines 7-9: "Subsequently, the releasable paint
18 film is peeled off." No suggestion is made that the properties of the releasable paint enable
19 it to be peeled off as a single unitary piece, much less to be applied through a stencil plate
20 and much less to be peelable *en masse* with a stencil plate from a surface imprinted by the
21 paint through opening in the stencil plate.

22 In contrast to Lopez, JP '039, and all of the other prior art of record, applicant's
23 method, as is clearly specified in Claim 44, produces a novel and non-obvious result not
24 disclosed or suggested in the prior art. Thus, as stated on page 16, lines 24-28, continuing
25 at page 17, lines 1-7 of applicant's specification, removing the stencil plate and dried and thick
26 film leaves dye-penetrated imprinted characters or symbols on an object surface, which do
27 not require any washing step to remove residual thickening material.

1 As stated in the present application specification on page 18, lines 26-28,
2 continuing at page 19, lines 1-6, a novel aspect of the present invention entails forming a film
3 sufficiently thick and with sufficient tensile strength to overcome an adhesive bond to an
4 imprinted object surface without the film breaking or tearing apart. The thick film adjacent to
5 each stencil opening is removed with the stencil and remains attached to the stencil sheet,
6 forming a continuous film over the stencil opening. That capability, which is instrumental in
7 achieving the novel, unexpected and advantageous results of the present invention, is no
8 where disclosed in any single prior art reference or in any combination of prior art references.

9 As stated on page 27, lines 21-28 of the present application specification, the
10 thickness of the ink layer must be sufficient to prevent the dried film formed therefrom from
11 breaking or not releasing adequately upon attempted removal from a surface. This important
12 characteristic of the method of the present invention is no where hinted at in the prior art of
13 record.

14 With respect to the criticality of the ink layer and film thickness, page 26, lines 13-18 of the
15 present applicant's specification specifies a useable range of 0.5 millimeter to 10 millimeters,
16 and a preferred range of 1 millimeter to 5 millimeters. Nothing in the prior art suggests
17 criticality of ink layer thickness. It should be noted that the clean stripping of solidified film ink
18 remnants from imprinted and dye-penetrated indicia on an object surface *en masse* with a
19 stencil plate by the method recited in Claim 44 results in a finished imprinted area not
20 requiring any clean-up steps, a result not disclosed or suggested by any of the prior art of
21 record.

22 In view of the remarks above, it is submitted that Claim 44 clearly recites a method
23 which is novel and non-obvious over all of the prior art of record. Accordingly, prompt
24 allowance of Claim 44 and Claims 44-86, which depend therefrom is earnestly solicited.

25 Respectfully submitted,

26 William L. Chapin, Reg. #27,317
27 16791 Sea Witch Lane
28 Huntington Beach, California 92649
Telephone: (714) 625-3570

William L. Chapin *William L. Chapin*